

WORKERS WORLD

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MAY 6, 2010 Vol. 52, No. 17 50¢

'No worker is illegal!'

Racist Arizona law sparks protests, boycott

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

Arizona's sweeping, racist anti-immigrant bill has unleashed a firestorm of outrage from Arizona's oppressed communities. Even before Gov. Jan Brewer signed it into law on April 23, Arizona students and youths had called for protests of all kinds. The May Day action is expected to demonstrate this outrage.

Nationally a "Boycott Arizona" movement is gaining steam. Arizona business leaders fear it will isolate Arizona and cut their profits as it expands to a worldwide movement denouncing the apartheid-like conditions the new Arizona law imposes.

In effect, the law legalizes racial profiling and criminalizes all undocumented people as "trespassers." It also militarizes the border and contains provisions attacking day laborers, allows for the seizure of any vehicle used to transport an undocumented person, and calls for the arrest of anyone who provides assistance to an undocumented person.

President Barack Obama has already criticized the law as "misguided," and it is possible for the federal government to take steps to supersede its provisions. The previous April 15, however, some 800 or more Department of Homeland Security and other federal agents brutally descended on Tucson's oppressed communities. The feds terrorized families, stopping buses transporting children to school and setting up what amounted to a six-hour military occupation of the south side of the city.

Students set the fight-back example

In response to this repression and the legislature's passing of the bill, a group of nine community college students from throughout Arizona courageously chained themselves to the state Capitol building in Phoenix on April 20, demanding Gov. Brewer veto the bill. The nine called for a national movement to employ nonviolent civil disobedience as the next phase of the Immigrant Rights Movement.

While carrying out civil disobedience, the students were arrested by Maricopa County deputies and hauled off to the jail run by the infamous anti-immigrant Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Now known throughout the state as the Capitol Nine, the students were released early April 21.

Leilani Clark, a Pima Community College student and member of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), was one of the nine students arrested. Clark encouraged everyone to take action. Speaking on behalf of the Capitol Nine, Clark told Workers World: "Don't be divided or delayed by different interpretations of how to act — just act. Walk out, protest, educate, boycott, march, sit in, carry out civil dis-

MORE IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COVERAGE 7-8

obedience. Anything and everything. ASAP!"

In a news release published April 20, this is what the Nine said about SB 1070:

"Among other things, the bill would require law enforcement officers to investigate, detain and arrest people if there is 'reasonable suspicion' that a person may be undocumented. This would give police agents absolute power to racially profile on the basis of race, skin color, language, and/or accent. SB 1070 is only the latest attack that will turn Arizona into an apartheid state, where brown-skinned people are politically, legally and economically discriminated and segregated."

In their statement, the Capitol Nine explained the importance of their action: "Arizona is ground zero for apartheid legislation and it must also be ground zero for organized action. ... Our purpose is to expose Arizona's apartheid legislation and uphold our dignity and human rights."

Protests continue in the thousands

By the afternoon of April 20, about 100 people had gathered in downtown Tucson to protest SB 1070 and to demand that the governor veto the bill. The next day, some 200 high school students walked out of class to protest the bill.

On April 22 thousands protested outside the Capitol in Phoenix, and other actions took place April 23 in Phoenix and Flagstaff demanding that Brewer veto the bill. Students,

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WORKERS WORLD EDITORIAL

MAY DAY 2010 The critical issue

The May Day demonstrations this year, from Los Angeles to New York and many points in between, are breathing new life into the working-class struggle in the United States.

It's about time. In Arizona, the right wing has launched an offensive against immigrants hoping to split the working class at a time when tens of millions of workers are struggling with personal crises caused by lack of jobs and a mountain of debt. Home foreclosures and evictions are at an all-time high and working-class communities are struggling to stay above water.

The crisis isn't just personal — it's systemic, caused by an inevitable

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WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE



\$14 million suit won against illegal arrests

\$18,000 to each arrestee – IF you file before May 17

By Sara Flounders

Ten years ago, the International Action Center initiated a major demonstration focused on the prison industrial complex. It was held on in front of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. The march was called to take place on April 15, the day before militant actions to oppose the criminal policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which were meeting in that city; thousands of youth took part in those protests.

The IAC rally demanded freedom for all political prisoners, including Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier. It sought to draw the attention of the international media — which was gathering to hear the bankers and financiers at the IMF/World Bank meeting — to the millions of prisoners held captive in U.S. dungeons.

The IAC aimed to deepen class consciousness and to link a militant current of new activists to solidarity with the most oppressed African-American, Latino/a and Native American prisoners. Although the demonstration was a legally permitted protest, the public focus on the institutionalized racism of the prison system itself presented a major and intolerable challenge to the state's repressive apparatus.

After the rally ended at the Department of (In)justice, the march proceeded to the IMF building. Suddenly, and without warning or an order to disperse, the Washington, D.C., police closed the streets and arrested 700 protesters, along with some members of the media and passersby. Many arrestees were held for 18 to 24 hours in police buses and holding cells, painfully handcuffed wrist-to-ankle in cramped positions.

Coverage of the arrests, including photographs of the demonstration and interviews with arrestees, was front-page news in the Workers World newspaper dated April 27, 2000, the issue immediately following the police attacks on these protesters.

The IAC was determined to expose the pre-emptive and disruptive attacks on a legal demonstration and to publicize the massive illegal arrests. The organization was not going to allow the flagrant violation of the rights of freedom of speech and assembly to go unchallenged.

The Partnership for Civil Justice Fund diligently persevered and successfully sued the District of Columbia and won the largest class-action settlement of protester claims in U.S. history, totaling nearly \$14 million. It insures that each class member can file a claim to receive \$18,000 in financial compensation, that the arrests will be expunged, and that all arrestees who join in the settle-



Monica Moorehead, of IAC's Millions for Mumia, getting arrested in 2000.

WW PHOTO : SHARON AYLING.

ment will receive a court order declaring their arrest null and void.

Several lead plaintiffs in this case have already pledged to donate their funds from the settlement to the IAC to continue its 19-year legacy of organizing against war, racism and corporate bailouts, and for jobs and human needs.

How to file a claim

Those who can file a claim are “all persons who were detained and arrested on April 15, 2000, near the area of 20th Street, NW and I and K Streets, Washington D.C., in connection with the protest against the Prison Industrial Complex during the IMF/World Bank demonstrations.”

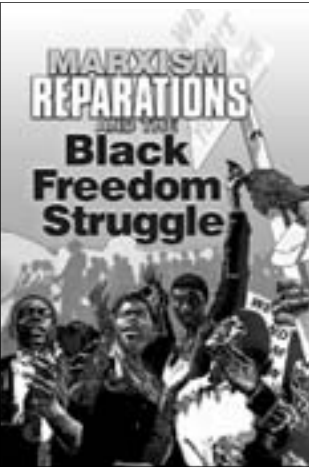
The funds will be distributed through a Class Administrator; the toll-free number is 1-877-567-4780. Claim forms can be downloaded at www.BeckerSettlement.com.

Mail them to: Becker v. District of Columbia Administrator, c/o Gilardi & Co. LLC, P.O. Box 8060, San Rafael, CA 94912-8060. **The deadline for filing all claims for financial compensation is May 17.**

Those who filed forms to be included in the lawsuit filed by the Partnership for Civil Justice Fund are not automatically included in this settlement. Each individual arrested must file a new Proof of Claim Form and mail it to the Class Administrator at the above address before May 17. This is the only way to receive the \$18,000 settlement. Otherwise, unclaimed funds will revert to the government.

The IAC wants to help insure that all individuals who were arrested on April 15, 2000, in Washington, D.C., receive their fair share of the settlement. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle



COVER ILLUSTRATION : SAHU BARRON

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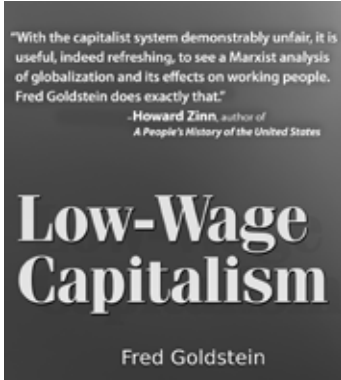
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BIRTHDAY WISH FROM AROUND THE WORLD

'FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL NOW!'

Various events took place in the U.S. and worldwide on April 24 to celebrate the 56th birthday of African-American political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal. The main birthday wish echoed in each event was a demand for freedom for the award-winning journalist and former Black Panther.

Known as “the Voice of the Voiceless,” Abu-Jamal has been on Pennsylvania’s death row since 1982, following his conviction for killing a white policeman in Philadelphia. Abu-Jamal was railroaded to prison following a sham of a three-week trial. He has been denied any fair legal redress in the state and federal appeals courts, where evidence to prove his innocence could be presented.

The New York Free Mumia Coalition and International Concerned Family and

Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal have been spearheading a worldwide campaign for almost a year to press the U.S. Department of Justice to hold a civil rights investigation to expose a multitude of constitutional rights violations against Abu-Jamal that could help lead to his freedom.

In Harlem, N.Y., Writers for Mumia hosted a moving program of poets, spoken word artists and activists. Sue Davis and Louis Reyes Rivera (pictured) from the New York chapter of the National Writers Union emceed the April 24 event.

Other birthday celebrations for Abu-Jamal took place in Philadelphia; Chicago; Houston; San Diego; Baltimore; Pittsburgh; Richmond, Va.; Mexico City; London; and throughout Germany.

— Report & photos by Monica Moorehead



Sue Davis welcomed artists who participated in the celebration of Mumia's birthday.



Louis Reyes Rivera reads a poem for Mumia.



HOUSTON

Supporters of Mumia Abu-Jamal gathered at Houston’s S.H.A.P.E. Community Center to celebrate his birthday on April 24. The celebration began with revolutionary spoken words by one of Houston’s leading spoken word artists, Marcell Murphy, who wrote an original piece for Mumia. After singing, cake and ice cream, a serious discussion was held about Mumia’s legal status. People signed petitions to the U.S. Justice Department demanding a civil rights investigation and vowed to take copies to other organizations to get more signatures. Then the film “In Prison My Whole Life” inspired great motivation to act now to help save Mumia’s life. The event was sponsored by the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

— Gloria Rubac

SAN DIEGO

To honor Mumia Abu-Jamal on April 24, his birthday, San Diego activists gathered at the Spacebar Cafe for an evening of tribute and discussion. Organized by the African American Writers and Artists Inc. and the Free Mumia Coalition in collaboration with the Langston Hughes Poetry Circle and the San Diego International Action Center, the program opened with libations to fallen heroes offered by San Diego poet and activist Sylvia Tafaro, who also led the group in singing the African-American national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” Gloria Verdieu of the San Diego Mumia Coalition and the International Action Center welcomed everyone and gave a history of Mumia’s struggle against the vicious frame-up designed to silence his heroic voice.

The featured speaker on Mumia’s



current situation and the political context within which he continues his struggle was John Parker, West Coast coordinator of the International Action Center and a leader in many important struggles against racism and other forms of capitalist injustice. Zola Muhammad of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee gave an update on Peltier’s struggle against his FBI-instigated frame-up and asked everyone to sign a petition demanding his immediate freedom. The evening was also enriched by offerings of poetry and comments by many of the assembled.

— Report & photo by Bob McCubbin

Mumia activists demand justice



U.S. Dept. of Justice WASHINGTON, D.C.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Capping off a weekend of global celebrations of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal’s 56th birthday on April 24, supporters gathered in Washington, D.C., on April 26. There they held a press conference, march and rally to the Department of Justice to demand that Attorney General Eric Holder launch an investigation into civil rights violations of Abu-Jamal, who remains on death row in Pennsylvania. Abu-Jamal faces the unacceptable options of life in prison or reinstatement of the death penalty, despite the many violations of his rights.

— Betsey Piette

A racist travesty of justice

The tragic case of the Scott sisters

By Monica Moorehead

Anyone who still believes that the U.S. is the most democratic and just country in the world has only to examine the shocking case of the Scott sisters to be disabused of that erroneous notion. While this case is becoming more and more well-known by word of mouth, mainly on the Internet, the 16-year-old case has never received the national and international media attention that it so richly deserves. The facts of the case will explain the reason why.

Who are the Scott sisters?

Jamie and Gladys Scott are African-American sisters who lived in the small town of Forest, Miss., when they were arrested on Dec. 24, 1993, on a charge of armed robbery of two Black men. The amount involved in the robbery was \$11 and nobody was injured. In October 1994, both sisters were found guilty and received double-life sentences. They are not eligible for parole until they spend at least 20 years in prison.

Their sentence is very reminiscent of

the life sentence, without the possibility of parole, given to the martyred Black Panther and Soledad Brothers prisoner, George Jackson, in the early 1960s. Jackson was convicted of stealing \$70.

Three teenagers, who eventually admitted that they had committed the robbery, recanted the false testimony they gave during the Scott sisters’ trial. These teenagers stated before the judge and jury that they were forced by local authorities to implicate the sisters, with the promise of a lenient sentence. Even the robbery victims said that the sisters had nothing to do with the robbery. Neither Jamie nor Gladys had a prior record before this outrageous conviction and life sentence.

At the time of their arrest, conviction and sentencing, Gladys was 19 years old and pregnant with her second child; Jamie was a 22-year-old with three young children. Their children are being raised by Jamie and Gladys’ mother, Elaine Rasco. Despite having to move to Florida due to years of emotional stress, Ms. Rasco remains active in fighting for her daughters’ freedom.

The state and federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, have refused to hear the Scotts’ appeals. Since being in prison, Jamie has developed almost complete kidney failure due to poor diet and inhumane prison medical care. She is receiving irregular dialysis treatments and has gone into shock numerous times. If it were not for the pressure and local attention that community, legal and political activists have put on the prison authorities, Jamie Scott could have easily died.

How to get involved

There is a growing grassroots movement to broaden awareness around the Scott sisters’ case, including a letter-writing campaign demanding that Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder release them. The campaign also includes getting petitions signed and getting press releases sent to local, state and national press on the case.

The Scott sisters’ case has put another human face on the constant racist repression that is woven within the very fabric of U.S. capitalist society. In an Aug. 19



Gladys and Jamie Scott.

article, Jamie Scott wrote: “The injustices that have occurred are patterns within this county and their police departments. This type of injustice and exploitation has been done to many African Americans who have lived in this county for many years. They have been very successful in destroying many lives.”

Jamie continued: “This is a time we show Americans what really occurs in most small towns in the state of Mississippi. We are convinced that once this chain of events is exposed and unraveled, the events that occurred, the lives that have been destroyed, the pain and suffering the citizens of Scott County have endured; everyone will be utterly amazed, astonished and compelled to assist us in our plight for freedom.”

Go to freethescottsisisters.blogspot.com to read Jamie’s entire article, find out more information about the case and get involved. □

Activists organize to demand universal health care

By Naomi Cohen
New York

Health care activists from the Private Health Insurance Must Go! Coalition, in collaboration with Healthcare-NOW!, Physicians for a National Health Program (N.Y. Metro chapter) and Single Payer New York, gathered at St. Luke’s Hospital on April 24 to discuss moving forward in the fight for universal health care in the U.S.

Conference organizer and PHIMG Chair Ajamu Sankofa opened up the third annual teach-in and summit, asserting that “health care activists must develop an effective narrative showing that the current law cannot and will not work.” He raised the need to assess the current period, recognizing the pernicious impact of neoliberalism and privatization on society and the need to end the movement’s deferential treatment of the Democratic Party. “We need a movement like the civil rights movement,” he said, “to show that Medicare for all is not only fiscally responsible, but a moral imperative that saves lives and prevents pain and suffering.”

Dr. Margaret Flowers of PNHP quit her pediatric practice to become a full-time activist for single payer health care. She characterized the new law as “the exact opposite of everything we fought for — it means more power for the private insurance companies, more bureaucracy and more for big pharma [pharmaceutical industry].” Flowers pointed out that “the process of the past year shows how broken the political system is. The insurance

companies and pharmaceuticals were at the table, but not the people.”

No compromise on health care

Throughout the day, lessons drawn from the struggle of the past year were highlighted: (1) the importance of not compromising the basic needs of the people, which means fighting for a publicly financed universal health care system; (2) the need to clarify that universal health care means everyone, without exclusion of immigrants and women’s health needs; and (3) the need for political independence, as every congressperson who claimed to be for universal health care — including the Democrats and “socialist” independent Bernie Sanders — caved and in the end voted for the final bill.

Dr. Leonard Rodberg, chair of the Urban Studies Department at Queens College, City University of New York, presented a compelling slide show with statistics to show that the so-called reform would leave at least 23 million people uninsured. He also documented the enormous cost of the current bill, which has no provisions for controlling insurance premiums — thus, the burden of paying would fall on those least able to do so. He pointed to the fact that insurance premiums have doubled in the last decade and that these premiums would quickly grow to more than 20 percent of annual income for millions of people.

By contrast, Rodberg pointed out that HR 676, the Medicare for All bill introduced (but then abandoned) by Rep. John Conyers, would not cost any more than

what is presently spent on health care and would give everyone free choice to pick their doctors. It would allow for bulk purchasing and eliminate the 28 percent of health care funds that are now wasted on billing, coding and other unnecessary administrative expenses. Health care could be free to all, with no co-pays or deductibles, by imposing a payroll tax of 8 percent for employers and 4 percent for workers, in much the way that Social Security is funded.

Cuban medicine tops U.S.

In a panel discussion of building bridges to other movements, Basir Mchawi, host of “Education at the Crossroads” on WBAI, described the struggle against the privatization of education as being parallel to the privatization of health care. Anne Bove, representing the New York State Nurses Association at Bellevue Hospital, addressed how the health care crisis impacts nurses and hospital workers. Sharon Eolis, a nurse practitioner with the Bail Out the People Movement, spoke about how socialized medicine in Cuba has reduced infant mortality there to five per 1,000 births — a figure that is lower than U.S. infant mortality rates.

Ellen Catalinotto, a nurse midwife and supporter of the May 1 Coalition, addressed the racist exclusion of undocumented immigrants from any access to the “health exchanges” in the bill. She explained that prenatal care — which is not covered by emergency Medicaid — could detect and prevent many complications suffered by mothers and babies.

‘Mandate’ came from right-wing think tank

Dr. Andy Coates of PNHP in Albany, N.Y., pointed to the extreme drift to the right among U.S. politicians, showing that the “mandate” that everyone pay for health insurance, now enshrined in the bill passed by Congress, was originally a demand raised by the right-wing Heritage Foundation. He urged that those present “use the lessons of the civil rights movement to fight for universal health care and reject the idea that health care be dependent on a boss or a spouse.”

Panelist Katie Robbins, a national organizer for Healthcare-Now!, was among nine activists who were arrested recently for staging a protest against the insurance industry. Direct action was promoted as a way of gaining attention to the life-and-death struggle for universal health care. From the audience, a number of disabled activists raised the urgent need to include long-term care as part of any health care legislation, pointing out that current laws force people who need long-term care to impoverish themselves before they can qualify for Medicaid. They protested against the New York Health Plus bill introduced into the New York state Legislature by Dick Gottfried because it excludes coverage for long-term care.

Most of the more than 100 attendees felt energized and more dedicated than ever by the conference, which ended with the announcement of a number of follow-up meetings and actions. For more information visit www.phimg.org or e-mail info@phimg.org. □

Amid the release of austerity budget

Detroit judge issues preliminary injunction to halt school closings

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

Two major developments in Detroit have highlighted the struggle against ruling-class attempts to privatize the public education system and impose a massive “rightsizing” plan that would dislocate thousands of residents.

Judge Wendy Baxter of the Wayne County Circuit Court ruled April 16 that the state-appointed emergency financial manager, Robert Bobb, could not proceed with plans to close more than 40 public school buildings without consulting with the elected Detroit Board of Education. The ruling was in response to a lawsuit filed March 2 on behalf of several schoolteachers, parents and students in opposition to the arbitrary decision being made by the appointee of Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

On March 23, the suit was joined by the Board of Education after plans were announced to shut down 45 schools. Baxter’s ruling declared that the emergency financial manager’s responsibilities did not include the right to make unilateral decisions that impacted the school district’s academic policy.

Closing the schools would have a devastating impact on both the public education system as well as the affected neighborhoods. Thousands of parents, community members and students have attended numerous public hearings called

by Bobb over the last several weeks, making their case for keeping the schools open. Demonstrations have taken place in opposition to the closings of several schools, including Northwestern, Cooley and Western.

These plans targeted some of the most academically successful schools within the district, where students have made significant progress in regard to performance on standardized tests, as well as enhancing parental and community participation.

Attorney George Washington, who filed the lawsuit, was interviewed April 18 on the “Fighting for Justice” radio program on WDTW. He considered Baxter’s injunction a temporary victory on behalf of public education and local control of Detroit schools.

Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox, who is running for governor on the Republican ticket, immediately filed an appeal to overturn Baxter’s order. Both the Democratic Gov. Granholm and Cox are arguing that to restrict the decision-making power of the emergency financial manager over the Detroit Public Schools would stifle so-called reform efforts.

Since Bobb’s 2009 appointment, the DPS has accrued more than \$100 million in additional debt. On April 16, Bobb issued more than 2,000 layoff notices to teachers.

Andrea Egypt, a city employee and member of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions

and Utility Shut-offs, asked: “What is the purpose of laying off teachers, closing schools, leaving students to find their way to overcrowded schools further away from home? How is that an improvement?”

Egypt continued: “Once the children in the community are being targeted, it’s time for the people in Detroit to stand up. We have seen this fight-back recently, with the protests by students and teachers on March 4 across the country.”

Mayor’s budget calls for layoffs, service cuts

Meanwhile Mayor Dave Bing issued his 2010-2011 budget, which raises more questions than provides answers. The \$2.9 billion budget indicates that more than 300 workers will be laid off and that more services will be cut.

On April 20 the Moratorium NOW! Coalition protested in front of the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center in downtown Detroit. The protest pointed out that hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are slated to be turned over to the banks for the mounting debt service obligations to various financial institutions.

The coalition is demanding an immediate halt to the paying of debt service, with those funds utilized to help people stay in their homes, to prevent layoffs and to restore city services.

Ruling-class elements openly call for the implementation of a plan to restructure the city. A report issued in April by the so-called “Citizens Research Council”

states that if the mayor and city council are not willing to enact the proposed austerity plans, “an emergency financial manager should be appointed under the Local Government Fiscal Responsibility Act in order to negate the authority of the mayor and city council in order to implement changes and renegotiate contracts.” (“Fiscal Condition of the City of Detroit”) The Council is directed by representatives of the banks, multinational corporations and capitalist-oriented academics.

The report continues: “If an emergency financial manager recommends, and the state approves, reorganization and restructuring can occur under protection of bankruptcy, which does allow contracts to be abrogated.”

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition is committed to building a broad-based coalition to link all the important issues facing the city. A massive outreach campaign is being planned to take on the banks, corporations and their agents in government in efforts to halt the downsizing and the further disempowerment of Detroit’s working people. □

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Banking reform?

It won't bring jobs or end workers' crisis

By Fred Goldstein

The big business media is focusing all eyes on Wall Street, Goldman Sachs and the question of financial regulatory reform. An economic recovery has been declared and now attention is being shifted to a supposedly “titanic” battle shaping up between the bankers and the Obama administration over reforming the financial system.

Workers, communities, students and youth should truly be concerned with financial reform, but not the kind that is being dished out in Washington. The kind of reform workers need is a radical reform in the distribution of wealth in this country.

A people's financial reform would take the trillions of dollars given to the banks and redirect those funds to create jobs for the 30 million workers who need them. It would redirect to cover the needs of the people all the ill-gotten gains of Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America and Citigroup, who got the lion's share of the \$10 trillion doled out by Washington in welfare for the rich.

For example, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan just announced that between 100,000 and 300,000 teachers' jobs are in danger because of a \$144 billion shortfall in state education budgets for the 2010-2011 school year.

Freeze payments to the banks

Those budgets are in shortfall partly because tax revenues have declined during the economic crisis. But the hundreds of billions of dollars that states and cities paid in interest to the banks have not declined. A true financial reform would freeze all payments to the banks and use that money to restore services.

The federal government pays a quarter of a trillion dollars in annual interest to these same financial robbers that it claims to be investigating and regulating in Washington right now.

These are the financial schemers who are putting people out of their homes on a daily basis by the tens of thousands. Millions have lost their homes and millions more are scheduled to be foreclosed or evicted. Bankers and corporations continue to roll in wealth while masses of people are homeless. This is what needs to be reformed.

Millions who cannot afford health care either go without or go into bankruptcy. Workers cannot pay their credit cards; students cannot pay on their loans; poverty levels keep rising; millions of children go to bed hungry at night; 6 million families live on food stamps alone; food pantries are overwhelmed by demand; schools and hospitals are being closed; water systems,

bridges and roads are decaying.

Financial reform that does not deal with this mass social and economic emergency, but instead argues over how much the bankers can be allowed to fleece each other and the people, is a complete mockery. Real financial reform of a working-class character would take the financial resources of society, controlled by the banks and the government, and redirect them away from the rich — who create nothing but misery, poverty and unemployment — and steer them to meet the needs of the workers, who create the wealth.

Government and bankers

Of course, there is a serious battle between the Obama administration and the bankers. The bankers do not want any regulation at all. Jamie Daimon, CEO of JP-Morgan Chase, put it plainly when he said that a reform of derivatives alone could cost the bank \$500 million to \$750 million in annual profits. (www.benzinga.com)

The Obama administration, on the other hand, is responsible for maintaining the stability of the capitalist system as a whole. It took \$10 trillion to bail out the banks in this last crisis. The government debt skyrocketed as a result. The Treasury and the Federal Reserve as well as many sections of big business do not want this to happen again. The government and the system cannot afford it.

The Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve System, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and other government financial authorities sat on their hands and aided the buildup of the great bubble that burst and brought the housing market down. They shut their eyes as the financial swindlers were peddling billions of dollars in subprime mortgages, bundling them up and selling them all over the globe.

But now that there is a financial and economic disaster, the government is trying to put some restraint on the reckless speculation and swindling of the financial oligarchy.

One of the biggest fights is over the regulation of trading in derivatives, that is, financial betting instruments. U.S. banks hold \$200 trillion worth of these high-priced gambling cards. JPMorgan Chase and Goldman Sachs have the largest holdings; they and five other U.S. banks hold 97 percent of these derivatives. They make tens of billions of dollars from these behind-the-scenes trades. When the trades go bad, the way they did with AIG and Lehman Brothers, the government gets stuck with the bill.

That is what all the heat is about in the struggle over the financial reform bill. At this moment, the capitalist government and capitalist bankers have divergent interests. But neither of them is taking any real action to alleviate the deep crisis of the working class and there is no real sign of a reversal of the mass suffering and hardship any time soon.

The fundamental problem: capitalism

The present proceedings in Congress are being compared to the financial reform of 1935, when the banks were reined in. The Securities and Exchange Commission was created. The Glass-Steagall Act was created, forbidding commercial banks from dealing in the stock market.

But even though that New Deal bank reform was far stronger than the meager attempt now going on in Washington to limit the swindling, the reforms of the 1930s did not fundamentally do anything to help the workers or change capitalism. Financial reform could not overcome capitalist overproduction during the Great Depression.

The fact is that three years after the reform, in 1938, there was an economic crash almost as great as the crash of 1929-33. The only way the U.S. economy got out of the Depression was through war. In fact, unemployment was 17 percent before the war buildup started.

An examination of the present crisis also reveals that financial reform is not the fundamental problem. The problem is the profit system itself.

The “recovery” of business is now at least seven months old. Yet 30 million workers still can't get full-time jobs. Some 6.4 million workers have been out of work for more than 27 weeks, a record in the period since World War II. This is a “jobless recovery.”

During the last several decades the bosses, in order to boost their profits, have broken unions, demanded concessions, instituted speedup and outsourced jobs to places where they can super-exploit low-wage workers. But, above all, they have ruthlessly and relentlessly used every form of new technology to destroy jobs, jobs that will never come back.

They have increased the productivity of labor and reduced the skills needed for jobs by using robots of all kinds, sensors, automated production, computers, management software, bar codes and every technological device to eliminate jobs and reduce the wages of those workers who remain.

By making workers produce more and more in less and less time and lowering

wages across the board, the corporations make it harder and harder to find buyers for the goods and services that workers create.

This results in capitalist overproduction. This is what was underneath the recent financial crisis. After the crisis hit, it was revealed that 8 million housing units were built between 2000 and 2007, but the population could afford to buy only 6.5 million. The auto industry had built up the capacity to produce 19 million cars but the population could only afford to buy 10 million, at most.

This is because the capitalists compete with each other to get a larger market share so they can get more profit. When the market cannot absorb the goods and services, profits cannot be made and the bosses reduce production and lay off workers.

The so-called recovery is illustrated by Ford Motors, which recently declared itself to be profitable again. But Ford achieved this by laying off 53,000 workers, shutting down 15 auto plants, and negotiating a two-tier wage system in which new hires get \$14 an hour and few benefits — less than half what the autoworkers were making previously. Of course, GM and Chrysler did the same thing during bankruptcy and before.

In other words, for the capitalist, profit is the only thing that matters. Capitalist overproduction means that more is produced than can be sold at a profit. It is not that people do not need cars and houses. Millions of people need cars and the homeless population in the U.S. is growing. Just as millions need food while agribusiness gets paid not to grow food, in order to keep prices up.

Workers, communities, students and youth must fight for working-class reform. That means getting the government to provide jobs on the scale of the Works Progress Administration of the 1930s. Eight million jobs were created under the WPA.

Above all, we must mobilize and build class unity against the bosses. The ruling class is trying to divide us in Arizona by passing racist, fascist pass laws worthy of apartheid. Class unity and class struggle is the road to real working-class reform of the capitalist system of exploitation.

The writer is author of the book “Low-Wage Capitalism,” a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on the U.S. working class. He has also written numerous articles and spoken on the present economic crisis. For further information visit www.lowwagecapitalism.com.

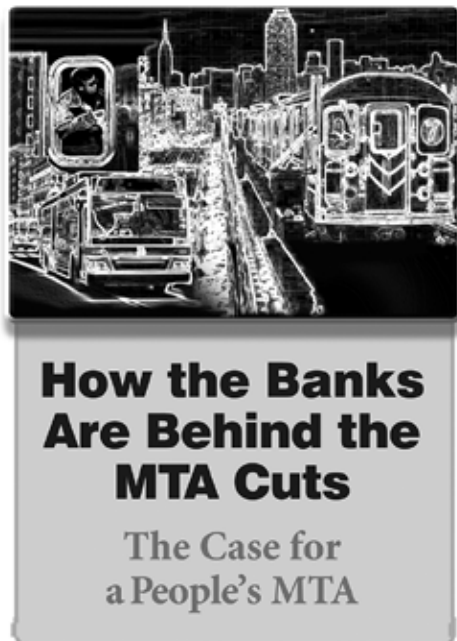
Money is there for human needs

Federal budget 2010

- \$1 trillion to war profiteering companies
- \$263 billion in interest payments to banks for past war debt
- \$582 billion in interest payments to banks for other borrowing

National security means good jobs, homes, education, health care, equality, higher social security and veterans' benefits — not war for oil and profit.

All this money comes from workers; the capitalist class pays almost no taxes at all. It is our money, their deficit; we don't owe anything, they owe us. Unite to mobilize the working class and the oppressed to get it back. All power to the people! ☐



A research project of the Bail Out the People Movement.

Call 212-633-6646 to order or go to www.bailoutpeople.org to read online. \$2 plus shipping fees

Stop layoffs of transit workers, service cuts!

New brochure: 'How the banks are behind the MTA cuts'

From 1989 to 2009 the banks took \$17.3 billion from the Metropolitan Transit Authority in interest payments. In 2010 interest payments will be \$2 billion. The MTA is a cash cow for the banks and contractors who are ripping us off. A mass movement of workers and riders in NYC can demand a full or partial emergency stop to these payments to the banks. The banks are making record profits from bailouts and handouts while we suffer loss of services and layoffs. We have to challenge the idea that there is no money.

Deficit? No \$\$ for jobs and human needs? Baloney!

The war and the banks are stealing our tax dollars. Capitalist city, state and federal governments are taking our money and handing it over for interest payments to the banks and to war-profiteering corporations who own the politicians. We need to unite all those fighting budget cuts and layoffs to demand the return to the people of the following money:

NYC 2010 budget = \$63 billion.
Interest payments to banks = \$15 billion (1/4 of the budget!)

Illinois workers, students protest layoffs, cuts

In one of the largest protests in Illinois in years, more than 15,000 workers and students from across the state descended on the state Capitol in Springfield, Ill., April 21 to demand legislators “show some guts” and pass progressive taxation to fund jobs, restore and increase public services and end structural debt to the banks. The workers and students staged a rally at the Capitol and then marched inside. There they confronted both Democrat and Republican legislators about their ongoing collusion with the bosses and bankers, who continue to close schools, lay off thousands, eviscerate public services, privatize and wage war.

The Responsible Budget Coalition, a coalition of more than 200 labor-community-student organizations led by unions such as the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, UNITE-HERE and the Service Employees union, mobilized for weeks. Thus hundreds of buses and other vehicle caravans took over Springfield with fighting mad workers and students, primarily from the public sector but including private industry workers. The coalition and other organizations are increasing their pressure on the Illinois legislators through petitions, rallies, phone and e-mail campaigns and more. (www.abetterillinois.com)

— Bryan G. Pfeifer



PHOTO: HEATHER STONE

Labor & community support crucial as Nurses' strike enters week four

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

BULLETIN — As we go to press on April 27, a settlement has been made between the nurses and Temple University Hospital. See workers.org for updates.

As the strike by 1,500 nurses and professional staff against Temple University Hospital in North Philadelphia heads into its fourth week, the struggle is becoming a battle to win the hearts and minds of the community.

On April 21, strikers and their families were joined by an outpouring of labor and community support at a two-hour rally and picket line around the hospital. Despite a steady rain, more than 1,200 people participated in the largest support for the strike to date.

Nurses from Crozer-Chester Medical Center and Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital were there. They belong to the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals, which represents the striking TUH workers. Temple University students also took part.

Unions represented included American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Councils 33 and 47; the Service Employees union; the American Federation of Teachers; the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers; the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers; Steamfitters Local 420; the Steel Workers union; the Teamsters union; and the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers.

There were members of Communication Workers Local 3801, the International Electrical Workers union, the Brotherhood of Railroad Maintenance Workers, the Transport Workers Union, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the Food and Commercial Workers union, National Association of Letter Carriers Local 157, National Nurses United, the AFL-CIO and the Fire Fighters Union IAFF Local 22. Several unions presented

donations to PASNAP's strike fund.

Community support was evident by participation of Jobs with Justice, the IWW, the Philadelphia-area Project on Occupational Safety and Health, the NAACP, the Bail Out the People Movement, the Philadelphia International Action Center and the Health Care NOW! Coalition. Several of these groups plan a benefit for the nurses and their families in West Philadelphia on April 29.

Toward the end of the rally strikers and family members, including young children, gathered across from a hospital entrance as at least eight coach buses, paid for by TUH, unloaded and picked up strikebreakers for a shift change. For 30 minutes protesters chanted, "Scabs go home!" and "Shame on you!" as the well-paid replacement workers entered and left the hospital.

Concern for patient safety

The striking nurses are concerned over a potential unsafe environment at the hospital. This is a major issue, in part, because of a provision in management's "last, best offer," put on the table in September, that would have prohibited nurses from publicly voicing concern over the quality of patient care.

PASNAP has asked for an investigation into the credentials of the 850 replacement nurses and staff that TUH is using during the strike. On April 18, a critical care patient removed her monitors and walked out of the hospital with catheters in her veins and a blood oxygen measuring device still on her finger. She approached the picket line of striking nurses and pleaded not to be sent back into the hospital due to reportedly bad nursing care.

Striking nurse Maureen May, who convinced the patient to return to the hospital, questioned the quality of the replacement nurses, as she noted that removing the monitors would have set off an alarm to the nursing staff signaling death or cardiac arrest. The patient report-

edly left the hospital again the next day despite being in the heart monitoring unit, where she should have been closely monitored.

Stacy Mitchell, deputy secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, reported that her agency has investigated "a lot" of complaints about the hospital since the strike began. Other government agencies have been investigating TUH's use of a national strikebreaking company, Health Source Global Staffing, to secure the replacement workers. Earlier in April, both TUH and HSGS were cited for failing to pay Philadelphia city wage taxes.

PASNAP has questioned HSGS's practices since the strike began. Bill Cruice, executive director of the nurses' union, provided the Philadelphia Daily News with paperwork indicating that Gary Warren Fanger, co-director of HSGS, and his company lost numerous court judgments from 1993 to 2007, most of them stemming from failure to pay state and federal taxes (Philadelphia Daily News, April 3).

The union won a victory on April 21 when the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court denied TUH's request for a stay on tuition reimbursement to the nurses while management appeals a decision by the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board. The board had ruled against the hospital after they cut this benefit with no notice last year. The court ordered TUH to pay everyone who is eligible within the next two weeks. However, this issue has not been resolved in contract negotiations.

Management ad campaign

TUH management upped its attack on the union on April 25 with an expensive full-page ad in the Philadelphia Inquirer. Their "Open Letter to the Community" dredges up the same argument management has used all along that TUH's concession-laden contract offers are reasonable "in light of today's mar-

Continued on page 8

On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

Rio Tinto lockout protested

Workers in Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver protested in front of British consulates on April 16 to demand justice for nearly 600 members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 30 who were locked out Jan. 31 at Rio Tinto's Borax mine in Boron, Calif. The protests came a day after a locked-out miner addressed shareholders at Rio Tinto's annual general meeting in London, asking the company to end its lockout at the world's second largest borax mine.

Rio Tinto, one of the world's largest mining companies, with a history of union busting and human rights abuse around the globe, made nearly \$5 billion in profits in 2009. Nevertheless, the company locked out the workers after they voted down a giveback-packed contract. Rich Rogers, executive secretary-treasurer of the Greater Boston Labor Council, denounced Rio Tinto's use of "economic terrorism tactics against these brave families who are standing up for good jobs." (AFL-CIO blog, April 16) To help the miners, make a tax-deductible contribution to Labor Community Services and write "Boron Lockout" in the memo line. Mail the check to Labor Community Services, 2130 W. James M. Wood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006.

Study shows low nurse-patient ratio saves lives

In light of the heroic nurses' strike at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia, it's exciting that a new study by the University of Pennsylvania proves the validity of an important component of what the nurses are fighting for. The study shows that California's nurse-to-patient staffing law, instituted in 2004 after a long battle, reduces patient deaths, allows nurses to spend more time with each patient, and helps keep experienced nurses on the job. The study shows that if other states followed the California ratios, patients' lives would be saved. Malinda Markowitz, co-president of the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United, said the study shows what "California RNs have long known — safe staffing saves lives." (AFL-CIO blog, April 20)

NYC building workers' strike averted

The more than 30,000 door attendants, janitors, porters and superintendents at thousands of New York City residential buildings refused to back down. Instead, their unity, rallies and strike vote forced the Realty Advisory Board, the negotiating body for the \$584 billion real estate industry, to meet their demands on April 21. Now members of Service Employees Local 32BJ will get a wage increase, protected health care and pension benefits, and no givebacks.

Continued on page 10

Resistance grows to Arizona's apartheid law

By John Catalinotto

Besides the ones in Arizona itself, protests in the United States and abroad greeted a new Arizona anti-immigrant bill that was signed into law on April 23.

In New York City on April 23, the Bail Out the People Movement demonstrated on a day's notice in front of Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Varick Federal Detention Facility in downtown Manhattan. Even as Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed the bill into law, some 50 people, including one woman whose spouse had recently been deported to Trinidad, were holding signs and chanting against racial profiling and in solidarity with immigrants' wishes to gain legalization.

The group chanted many slogans that defended immigrants' rights as part of the rights of all workers.

Throughout the April 24-25 weekend, government officials and public figures spoke out against the new law. President Barack Obama called the law "misguided," and raised the possibility that the Justice Department would take some action against it. The law doesn't go into effect until 90 days after it was signed, on July 21, if it is not overturned before then.

Obama's criticism appears directed at gaining support for a new federal immigration law, like the one that Sen. Charles Schumer is preparing to propose. This proposed law would regulate immigration so that conditions are more stable, but in a way that is prejudicial against immigrants who don't have legal papers and is harmful to all workers. Schumer would make legalization an onerous process with no guarantees, militarize the border and make all work-

ers carry biometric identification cards.

Rep. Raul Grijalva from Arizona called on the president to not cooperate with the new law and also for a boycott of his state. Other public figures joined rank-and-file calls for a boycott of Arizona, including San Francisco city officials, the Rev. Al Sharpton and the editors of La Opinión — the largest Spanish-language newspaper in the U.S.

Rank-and-file groups have targeted Arizona's Major League Baseball team, the Diamondbacks, as part of the boycott. This provides a target for protest in every city the team is scheduled to play in, with protests already set in Chicago.



New York, April 23.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

The Port Truckers held a news conference on April 24 at the downtown Federal Building in Los Angeles — which is also ICE headquarters — to announce that they would be boycotting Arizona until the legislation is repealed. They urged other truckers to do the same. □

Exposing the myths show why U.S.-born workers should Support legalization for immigrants

By Gavrielle Gemma

Myth: Undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes

Fact: Two-thirds of undocumented workers pay Medicare, Social Security and personal income taxes. Meanwhile, they are denied food stamps, housing subsidies, Medicaid and Medicare. In 2005, when there was a Social Security surplus (before the government "borrowed" money to pay for war, creating a crisis) 10 percent of the surplus (\$50 billion) came from undocumented immigrants. They pay sales taxes and property tax through rent. The National Research Council says that each immigrant contributes \$80,000 more in

taxes than they ever receive back.

Fact: Most corporations, banks and military war profiteers pay almost no taxes at all. Goldman Sachs, with profits of billions this year, will pay 1 percent tax.

Fact: Immigrants paid \$90 billion in taxes in 2006 and received only \$5 billion back in services.

Myth: Immigrants are a drain on the economy

Fact: Professor Ford of the University of Tennessee, an expert on immigration and taxes, states undocumented workers contributed \$428 billion dollars to the country's gross domestic product in 2006.

Fact: When Riverside, N.J., passed

laws against undocumented people and called in Immigration and Customs Enforcement, immigrants fled the town, causing the local economy to collapse. These laws were repealed and immigrants were urged to return.

Myth: Making immigrants illegal helps native-born workers

Fact: For 100 years after the Civil War, Black workers in the South were locked out of decent jobs, had no political rights and lived in terror. This was called Jim Crow, similar to what immigrants face today.

Black workers were paid extremely low wages and white workers received low wages as well. The South had the lowest wages for both Black and white workers compared to other U.S. regions. The lower wages of Black workers brought down whites' wages. The legacy of racism was poverty for all. We have to bring up the bottom, or the bosses will lower the top.

Fact: Jim Crow racism was used to bust unions then, and anti-immigrant raids serve the same purpose today. Black workers were at first denied jobs in steel by the bosses and the union supported this racist policy. When steelworkers went on strike to unionize in 1919, the bosses brought in Black workers as scabs. During the 1930s, when the United Steel Worker Organizing Committee and the Congress of Industrial Organizations opened the doors to Black workers, the union finally succeeded.

Fact: In Iowa in 2008, ICE agents raided the Postville Agriprocessor Plant, where the Food and Commercial Workers union was organizing. They arrested 389 workers, including union leaders, and the campaign was crushed.

Myth: Immigrants are taking jobs away

Fact: We are losing jobs. Why? 1) Because companies are using the technology our labor financed to hire fewer workers; 2) because companies are allowed to run away and given tax breaks and subsidies with our tax dollars to do this; 3) because U.S. "free trade" agreements (a handout to U.S. companies) cut U.S. jobs and destroyed rural economies, in Mexico, for example; 4) because our tax dollars are used to lay off workers. General Motors got billions in bailouts and then shut 20 plants, cut wages and benefits. Why wasn't the bailout dependent on a no-layoff clause? Now GM has opened the first nonunion plant in Michigan.

Fact: It is the capitalist system of profit that is responsible, not immigrants.

Myth: The govt. is passing anti-immigrant legislation to protect native-born workers.

Fact: That's baloney. The government is attacking every right of workers and collaborating with big business and the banks to bust unions, close plants, stores and offices. We need a national Jobs for All program. □

'No worker is illegal!'

Continued from page 1

including many high school students, held a demonstration April 23 in Tucson, walking out of school to do it.

Even after the governor signed the bill into law, people remained in the streets, protested throughout the weekend and launched a Boycott Arizona campaign.

Racism, budget cuts, private prisons and border militarization

The whipping up of anti-immigrant racism and the passing of this law must be looked at in relationship to the economic crisis. Arizona, like most other states, is implementing severe budget cuts that eliminate needed social programs, raise college and university tuition, close hospitals and schools and lay off hundreds of state workers while forcing the remaining workers to take a wage cut through furloughs.

The budget also calls for increases in every imaginable fee, from the use of state park facilities to the collection of trash. The devastating effects of these budget cuts will mean more workers losing their homes and their jobs, the continuing decay of infrastructure and a rapid decline in the living standard of workers. Although it is the capitalist system that is the root cause of this economic crisis, the false message inundating the people is that "illegal immigration" causes these problems.

Meanwhile, the implementation of laws like SB 1070 provide a bonanza for the private prison industry. Companies like Corrections Corporation of America, which operates all the detention centers in Arizona, stand to make enormous gains. Keeping CCA's prisons full keeps CCA's profits coming in.

Wackenhut, Inc. will also benefit from this law, as they provide the transporta-

tion service that takes immigrants from the CCA detention centers and dumps them at the Mexican border.

The evening before signing SB 1070, Gov. Brewer signed an executive order allocating \$10 million to the high-tech Border Security Enhancement Program. This is money that should be used to fund education and health care but instead will be used to further militarize the border.

The executive order was accompanied by calls from Arizona's U.S. Sens. John McCain and John Kyl for the Obama administration to send at least 3,000 more National Guard troops to the border.

In the most recent development, a bill was introduced in the Arizona State Senate that would allow the State of Arizona to allocate \$200,000 to fund a volunteer force — like the fascist-like Minutemen — to patrol the border.

Boycott Arizona!

At a luncheon of business owners in Tucson, Gov. Brewer gave a keynote address. While protesters massed outside the hotel hosting the luncheon, the worried business owners inundated the governor with questions regarding the Boycott Arizona initiative and its effect on their bottom line.

Although she attempted to placate them, business owners could sense the mood of the protesters and see how serious they are about crippling Arizona business in response to this vicious attack on all working people.

In 1987, when then-Gov. Evan Mecham canceled the state's Martin Luther King Holiday, a boycott Arizona campaign was successful in getting the King Holiday reinstated.

On to May Day! Boycott Arizona! Divest from the apartheid-like police state! □

On Saturday, May 8, 2010 The 75 Anniversary of The WPA

PROTEST 4 A JOBS PROGRAM

Sat. MAY 8th Noon

Washington, D.C.
Rally at the Dept. of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. NW
(between 2nd and 3rd Sts.)

Seventy-five years ago, Pres. Roosevelt signed an order establishing the Works Projects Administration, the biggest public jobs program in U.S. history. Join unemployed people, trade unionists, community and youth activists and organizations from all over the country on Saturday, May 8 in Washington, D.C. to call for a real jobs program for the 30 million unemployed and underemployed people in the U.S. today. We will protest at the Labor Dept. and then meet to plan our next steps.

A National Strategy Summit on FIGHTING 4 THE RIGHT TO A JOB

CWA Building, 501 Third St. NW

- ✓ Setting the dates for national days of outrage to bail out the unemployed
- What would a real jobs program look like?
- ✓ The need for a jobs program for youth
- Should organized labor call a mass march for jobs in D.C.?
- ✓ How the fight for jobs is also a fight against anti-immigrant racism and the 'tea party'.
- ✓ Moratorium on foreclosures, layoffs, workplace closings
- ✓ Extending unemployment benefits

Forging unity in the fight for the right to living wage jobs

www.BailoutPeople.org Phone: 212-633-6646 Email: March4JOBS@gmail.com

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

May Day amidst global mayhem

Taken from a March 31 audio column. Go to www.prisonradio.org to hear more columns and to www.millions4mumia.org to get updates on Abu-Jamal's case.

As May approaches, the day celebrated for over a century as an emblem of workers' power, May Day seems to have become a symbol of its fall.

That's because, as the economic system has gone through shocks, aftershocks and tremors, social and communal wealth has been funneled to banking and corporate interests — bailouts for billionaires, while workers have faced, at best, a plague of cutbacks; at worst, mass layoffs and firings as businesses reorganize by being even more antagonistic to labor.

Marx and Engels rightly determined that "the modern state is but the executive committee of the bourgeoisie." Why else would the world's economic powers pour hundreds of billions into corporate coffers — virtually no questions asked — while dropping a pittance, like coins in the cup, to workers and their families?

May Day began in America in the midst of the Haymarket Rebellion of the 1800s in struggle for the 40-hour work week and an end to child labor.

May Day still represents workers' struggle in America, in Europe, in Africa and Asia, against state and corporate repression and greed.

In a nutshell, capitalism is in severe crisis and the phony wars and very real rise of cronyism are but mirrors of that crisis.

If workers are to use their billions to change the world, they must join together across false barriers to build a new and better world where life and liberty are more precious than profit.

It's not only possible — it's necessary. □



Mumia Abu-Jamal's book,

'Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners defending prisoners v. the U.S.A.' is available at Leftbooks.com.

Nurses' strike enters week four

Continued from page 6
ket and economic realities."

In an attempt to portray the workers as greedy, the ad says the nurses' existing average hourly rate is \$39.80. However, management neglects to mention that it's been paying each of the 850 scab replacements an average hourly rate of from \$137 up to \$250. That's in addition to housing them in luxury hotels and paying for meals and transportation.

To date, the hospital's management has now squandered well over \$9 million to pay strikebreakers. This is more money than it would have cost to cover all of the provisions of the four-year contract sought by the nurses and allied professionals.

Management has also been mum about its own compensation. The union has

African immigrants in the U.S. and Europe Discrimination, repression and struggle against world imperialism

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, **Pan-African News Wire**

This year's May Day commemorations are taking place amid escalating racist and xenophobic attacks against immigrant communities in the U.S. and Western Europe. The passage of an Arizona law that legalizes racial profiling, and the electoral campaigns by right-wing, anti-immigrant parties in Hungary, France, Italy and the Netherlands, illustrate the need to intensify efforts at building international solidarity among workers and the oppressed.

These attacks against immigrant communities coincide with the burgeoning economic crisis, which has resulted in massive layoffs of millions of workers of all nationalities and worsening social conditions in both the industrialized and underdeveloped states. The decline of the capitalist system has been characterized by massive bank bailouts, plant closings, shrinking of the public sector, budget cuts, denial of health care and the privatization of education. It has intensified the assaults on trade unions, the poor, people of color, women, lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people and other historically exploited and marginalized groups.

The immigrant rights struggle in the U.S. led to the revival of May Day in 2006. Millions of workers, led by the Latino/a communities throughout the country, challenged unjust policies that scapegoat the immigrant population, both documented and undocumented.

The conditions for immigrants of African descent, like the Latino/a communities, have been precarious in both the United States and Europe. Discrimination and repression leveled against African immigrants cannot be separated from the legacy of racism and national oppression against Black people in the U.S., who are ostensibly "citizens" of the country. This same contradiction also exists in Europe — where the conditions of immigrants must be viewed within the context of the ongoing subordinate position of people of color, who are supposed to be protected under the laws governing the various states.

African immigrants face racism in U.S.

Over the last several decades there has been a significant increase in the number of immigrants from the Caribbean and the African continent living inside the United States. Nonetheless, there was a decline in the number of Caribbean nationals who were granted naturalized citizenship during 2009. In 2008 some

131,935 people from the Caribbean gained citizenship in the U.S., in comparison to a significant decline to 84,917 in 2009. (Caribbeanworldnews.com, April 23)

This reduction in the number of people from the Caribbean becoming citizens follows a broader pattern. In 2008 some 1,046,539 overall became naturalized, while in 2009, there were only 743,715.

It is not surprising that Cuban immigrants topped the list of those from the Caribbean becoming naturalized, with 24,891. The U.S. has favored and even encouraged immigration from Cuba in the five-decades-long destabilization campaign against the island's socialist government. But even the number of Cubans being given citizenship declined from the 39,871 who became naturalized in 2008.

The group showing an increase in naturalization is nationals from the African continent. They face discrimination and racism in the U.S.

Several years ago Laurier T. Raymond Jr., the mayor of Lewiston, Maine, stated publicly that the Somali immigrant community should look elsewhere to live. Raymond voiced sentiments of the largely white city that the presence of immigrants from East Africa would adversely impact the living standards and culture of the broader community.

Jonathan Rogers, a Portland, Maine, resident, stated: "Can you imagine a city mayor turning away hoards of new residents and their contributions to the local economy in today's economic climate? Mayor Raymond wasn't alone, however. Many Mainers still harbor a sentiment of distrust, disapproval and hostility toward unfamiliar immigrants." (Portland Press Herald, April 14)

"Xenophobia can make you believe all sorts of things; that these new families are a drag on the economy, that they all live in public housing and are unemployed or that the low-income neighborhoods they may inhabit are the most crime-ridden in town."

Rogers encourages people to "take a tour of the neighborhoods with public housing developments in Portland, many of which are home to Somalis and other East African families. Compared to areas of similar income, you will find stronger communities, more thriving social networks and more civic-minded people there than anywhere else in the city."

The World Bank estimates that "African immigrants living abroad mostly in North America and Europe send home between \$32 and \$40 billion every year. This figure far exceeds the money that is given to Africa through formalized development aid channels." (Modern Ghana News, April 5)

Despite the constructive role played by African immigrants in the U.S., numerous cases have been reported of African immigrants being harassed, brutalized and murdered by law enforcement.

The Somali community in Minneapolis has been targeted as suspects in the so-called "war on terrorism." During President Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009, the FBI questioned Somali student activists about an alleged plot to assassinate the president. Mosques frequented by Somalis have been infiltrated by government informants and recently there have been reports in the corporate media claiming that youth are being recruited to fight against the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu.

Plight of African immigrants in Europe

Because of the impact of the world eco-

nomie crisis on the African continent, many workers and youth have fled as refugees to Europe in search of employment and a higher standard of living. These workers have been subjected to gross discrimination and violence from various European governments as well as racist vigilantes.

This anti-immigrant bias has been reflected in the electoral campaigns of various right-wing political parties who have openly advocated reprisals targeting African workers who seek asylum in European states. In Hungary in April, the right-wing Jobbik party gained 16 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections.

The same sentiment is reflected in France with the growth of the racist National Front Party, and in the Netherlands, where the Party of Freedom enjoyed gains in the recent elections. In Italy the anti-immigrant Northern League has openly spread racist sentiment against workers from Africa and other parts of the world.

In January in a town in southern Italy, two African immigrant workers were shot when air guns were fired from a moving vehicle. The incident sparked mass demonstrations and a rebellion. Workers took to the streets demanding that they be treated like human beings.

The rise in racism in Europe is closely linked with the deepening economic crisis within the Western capitalist states. Deutsche Welle reports that, "Although right-wing ideology takes different forms across Europe, it shares a common strategy: exploiting the fears of voters in times of crisis."

"Right-wing populists focus on their followers' discontent, says Wolfgang Kapust of German public broadcaster WDR. 'They offer easy answers to complicated problems: the economic situation, unemployment or social insecurity,' said Kapust. 'Above all, they want to get rid of, deport or "send home" foreigners and "the others."'" (April 12)

Workers have no borders

Inside the United States it is important that labor organizers and anti-racist and civil rights groups condemn acts of discrimination and violence against immigrant workers. These attacks are not just directed against the foreign-born and their descendants but are designed to weaken and intimidate the working class and the nationally oppressed as a whole.

The emergence of the so-called "Tea Party" movement in the U.S. represents another manifestation of an age-old phenomenon: ruling-class attempts to divide and conquer the working class and the oppressed. These angry workers and displaced middle-class whites are being encouraged by sections of the capitalist class to attack immigrants, African-Americans, Latinos/as, women, the LGBTQ communities, unions and all progressive forces.

In fostering international solidarity with immigrant workers, progressive forces inside the U.S. and Europe can build a united front against a potentially dangerous neo-fascist movement that is supported and promoted by the ruling class and its corporate media outlets.

Only a broad-based alliance of working people, immigrants and the nationally oppressed can effectively counter efforts by the capitalist class to further impoverish and politically isolate the struggles against the economic austerity imposed on the majority of people inside the United States and around the world. □

Led by Indigenous peoples

Climate change conference slams capitalist crimes

By Jen Waller
Cochabamba, Bolivia

Thirty thousand people convened at the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, Bolivia. The conference, which took place from April 19-22, hosted people from more than 135 countries and 90 official state representatives. Climate activists, community organizers, artists, musicians, scholars and workers from around the world joined forces over the common goal of finding an effective and practical solution to the climate crisis — a task that the rich, ruling countries of the world proved, at the Copenhagen Climate Summit, that they are incapable of accomplishing.

Organized by Evo Morales, the first Indigenous president of Bolivia, the conference was overwhelmingly representative of the people of Latin America, as well as residents of other developing countries in Asia and Africa. The common message was that the task of fighting the effects of climate change cannot be left to the countries that historically and presently are the biggest polluters and the most disrespectful of the rights of Pachamama (Mother Earth) and her people. The people who have historically lived in harmony with the earth and who are now feeling the most dramatic effects of climate change must determine the steps that need to

be taken to fight environmental destruction. This message was echoed over and over again by Indigenous people and oppressed people from all over the world.

Seventeen working groups worked tirelessly throughout the conference to discuss topics such as climate debt and climate migrants, as well as to establish a plan for a climate justice tribunal and a world referendum on climate change. Ultimately a summary of the groups' conclusions was put into an Agreement of the People, which can be found on the conference website at pwccc.wordpress.com.

The Agreement demands a commitment period from 2010 to 2017 “under which developed countries must agree to significant domestic emissions reductions of at least 50 percent based on 1990 levels, excluding carbon markets or other offset mechanisms that mask the failure of actual reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.” This proposal is vastly more demanding than the weak proposals that have been suggested by the rich countries that have thus far dominated the climate change debate.

Overall, the rhetoric of the conference was scathingly critical of capitalism and of the current state of mainstream climate change policy. At the inauguration of the conference on April 20, Morales and others spoke of climate change as a symptom of the disease of capitalist greed, which



PHOTO: ALEXANDRA CORAZZA

Inauguration rally on April 20th.

shamelessly oppresses the majority of the people of the world in the name of unbri-dled profits.

At the closing event on April 22, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez spoke against the capitalist system as well, linking it unmistakably with the current peril the earth is in. He said: “After all the setbacks, socialism has burst forth in Latin America. And that’s the epicenter of the battle.”

Latin America was, in fact, a very relevant place for the conference to be held, as it is already experiencing many of the effects of climate change. Bolivia’s glaciers are melting at breakneck speed — its iconic Chacaltaya glacier completely disappeared in 2009, a decade before it was

projected to.

In Bolivia, the Indigenous peoples of Latin America, as well as of Asia, Africa, North America and other places in the world, made it known that they are ready to lead the movement to fight global climate change. It is people such as them who are feeling the worst effects of climate change after committing little or no crimes against nature to cause this crisis.

The global climate change movement was built up stronger at the conference in Cochabamba. It is growing still, as more and more people open their eyes to the terror that has been wreaked on our earth and its people by the globalized capitalist system of oppression. □

Reflections on the real U.S. role south of the border

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

People here get insufficient and biased corporate media coverage of news south of the border. Yet, the upcoming May Day that millions of immigrant people in the U.S. resurrected in 2006 arouses reflection over the situation in the rest of the Western Hemisphere — and why the U.S. government and corporate media is so determined to hide it or, more often than not, present a completely distorted picture of those countries’ reality.

Perhaps it’s because U.S. imperialism has caused most of the suffering and misery in the south. The destruction of Mexico’s economy, for example, is why so many millions of Mexico’s sons and daughters come here in a desperate quest to survive.

Washington’s real role in those countries is hardly reported. Whether through its embassies or CIA-sponsored organizations, U.S. imperialism falsifies its role. Instead of admitting it defends its transnational companies’ interests — often spilling innocent blood in the process — it claims it acts through freedom-loving entities whose only purpose is to defend democracy and justice.

Corporate media often demonize Latin American presidents who disagree with U.S. imperialism’s policies or try to regain their country’s sovereignty. Consider the aggressive U.S. government and media attacks against Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua’s leaders.

Yet governments in countries where human rights are abused daily and murders are committed in the name of “democracy” — as in Colombia, Peru and now Honduras — are Washington’s best allies. So too is the rightist president of

Panama, who is taking rights away from the population.

Obama increasing hostilities

President Barack Obama’s administration has sharpened hostilities against the peoples and sovereign states of Latin America and the Caribbean. U.S. acts are trashing any hope raised by Obama’s somewhat friendly comments about establishing relations in a new base of respect, made during the Organization of American States summit in 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago. Since that speech, the Pentagon has dangerously increased the militarization in the region by taking control of at least seven new military bases in Colombia and at least four in Panama.

Washington has also promoted a vicious anti-Cuba media campaign praising the so-called Ladies in White, calling these counterrevolutionaries “dissenters.” They are really puppets at the hands of the U.S. Interest Section on the island. The U.S. government hypocritically condemns Cuba with accusations of human rights abuses while keeping in U.S. prisons the five Cuban heroes who tried to prevent acts of terrorism against Cuba by Miami-based terrorists.

In Honduras, U.S. officials supported last June’s military coup, then recognized the present Pepe Lobo administration even though Lobo represents the continuation of the coup against democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya. Washington has reestablished all aid to the present administration, even adding \$2.8 million more, though the current regime has committed blatant human rights abuses.

Human rights groups register nine vio-

lations a day, including murders, since Lobo took office at the end of January. In an effort to silence the opposition, rightists have killed seven journalists in this militarized country since then. Meanwhile the people have been organizing courageous resistance since the coup and are demanding a new constitution.

Justifying U.S. recognition, in mid-April U.S. Ambassador to Honduras Hugo Llorens said that Honduras has done “everything” necessary to rejoin the OAS, from which it was expelled after the coup. The Pentagon has recently opened a second military base in Honduras, ominously close to the border with Nicaragua.

In a visit to Mexico in late April, former President Bill Clinton proposed a plan allegedly to combat the drug violence plaguing Mexico. Clinton’s plan is similar to the Plan Colombia he imposed on that country while in office. Mexican President Felipe Calderon’s alleged war against organized crime had unleashed this wave of violence in the first place.

Even Mexican Secretary of Government Fernando Gómez Mont had to reject Clinton’s arrogant proposal. Gómez Mont said, “We need [U.S.] Americans to recognize the shame of selling weapons that kill Mexicans. That they recognize that it is their money, their consumer market, which promotes and encourages violence in Mexico.” (La Jornada, April 26)

Much has been reported in the U.S. about violence in Mexico, but nothing mentions that U.S. ally Calderon’s anti-popular policies have increased Mexico’s extreme poverty. Six months ago Calderon decreed that the electric company that served the Federal District be closed, effectively laying off 44,000 workers.

Electrical workers fight back

Since then, the union representing these workers, the Mexican Union of Electrical Workers (SME), has been on the streets demonstrating against the government policies and building support from other sectors. The SME is a class-conscious, militant union. The hero of Mexico’s 1910 revolution, Emiliano Zapata, once was a member.

The people’s struggle and resistance receives scant coverage here in the corporate media. Few outlets reported the mass demonstrations in Mexico a year ago that prevented the privatization of PeMex, the national petroleum company. Such a struggle could set an example for the workers’ struggle in these times of economic and financial crisis.

The reason Gómez Mont rejected a Plan Colombia-like plan for Mexico is clear. Initially presented as a “war on drugs,” Plan Colombia was obviously a fight against the people and particularly against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Army of National Liberation (ELN), two armed revolutionary movements.

Colombian President Alvaro Uribe extended this war against the workers organized in unions, Indigenous peoples, women, youth, peasants, Afro-descendants and other peoples in their organizations.

Uribe is the closest U.S. ally in the region. He is known internationally to have ties with the deadly paramilitaries who work hand-in-hand with the Colombian army and police. Throughout their existence, these joint forces have killed thousands of Colombians. Under Uribe, the paramili-

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MAY DAY 2010

The critical issue

Continued from page 1

economic collapse of the kind that has recurred many times over the last 200 years of capitalism.

The bankers and bosses, whose wealth continues to be astronomical, are treating working people like garbage to be thrown out once we are no longer useful to them. There is no other recourse but to fight back in a united struggle — and that's what May Day symbolizes.

To get the full measure of the significance of this year's demonstrations, it is necessary to review the history of this special day — what it was like in earlier periods of struggle, what happened to it during the many decades of reaction that are only now breaking up, and how it was revived with a bang in the year 2006.

This story goes all the way back to 1886 in Chicago. Working conditions were terrible and made worse by a depression. While many could find no work, others had to toil for 12 to 16 hours a day. On May 1, 200,000 workers walked off their jobs in a general strike demanding an eight-hour day. Two days later, police killed two striking workers at the McCormick Reaper Works.

The next day, May 4, a protest rally in Haymarket Square was attacked by police and someone — it was never proven who — threw a bomb. Police as well as workers were killed and injured. This was the excuse the bosses needed for an all-out anti-labor offensive. Eight labor leaders were arrested and charged with murder in the death of one of the cops. Four were hanged, one died in prison and, eight years later, the other three were pardoned by Illinois Gov. John Peter Altgeld, who condemned their trial as unfair.

In 1889, at an International Socialist Workers' Congress in Paris, some 400 delegates voted to call a universal day of demonstrations for the eight-hour day. A U.S. delegate asked that the date for this event be May 1, in honor of the Haymarket martyrs. That's how May Day was born as the international workers' day.

For decades, millions of workers all over the world marched on May Day in a show of international solidarity and unity. As workers' revolutions began to topple governments in Europe and Asia, May Day became an official holiday in many countries.

But not in the United States. Here, where May Day was born, it took a struggle, led by leftists, to bring out the union movement on May Day. After the anti-communist witch-hunt period of the 1950s, some of the best militants were hounded out of the unions. In 2005 the Million Worker March Movement, led by Black trade unionists and their allies, held a May Day rally in New York. But in general, the huge May Day demonstrations of the 1930s became little more than a memory.

Until May 1, 2006. On that day, between 1 million and 2 million people demonstrated across the country. It was a stunning development that caught the bosses by surprise.

Who revived May Day in the United States? Immigrants from some of the poorest countries, especially from Latin America. U.S. corporations had virtually destroyed their local economies as a

result of NAFTA and other "free trade" agreements, leading to a huge exodus by people seeking work. There were no longer barriers in their countries to exploiting U.S. corporations, which took over huge areas for agribusiness. But when the displaced workers and farmers sought to come to the U.S. for jobs, they found insurmountable barriers to prevent their legal entry.

When a bill was introduced in Congress in 2006 to criminalize these workers and their families, they came out in the millions to demand immigrant rights. Since then, May Day coalitions uniting workers of all backgrounds have held annual marches.

This May Day, immigrant workers will again be in the forefront. They will be joined by many unions and U.S.-born workers. Their demands will encompass the changes needed by the whole working class:

- a real government program to provide jobs for all;
- a moratorium on foreclosures, evictions, utility shutoffs and the seizing of workers' property by banks and other financial institutions;
- health care for all;
- a rollback of the cuts in education, hospitals and all other social services, and
- money for jobs, education and health care, not bailouts to big business or wars abroad.

But there is another demand of the greatest immediate importance to the millions who are threatened every day by Gestapo-like immigration raids in their communities: the demand for legalization.

So-called immigration reform, as embodied in a bill being drafted by Sen. Charles Schumer, is not the answer. What workers of all nationalities need is unity in the working class and the freedom to struggle in their own class interests. That's why legalization should be a cutting-edge demand of all May Day marchers.

Bosses and corporations in the United States are the richest in the world — while the workers have been losing ground for more than 30 years. The exploiters use their power over the political process and the media to create an atmosphere of racism, hatred of immigrants, sexism and oppression of lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender people. These parasites know that if workers are constantly fearful and fighting each other, we can't effectively fight the profit-driven parasites who are driving down our wages and stripping us of our dignity.

The unions taking part in May Day can lead the way toward broader unity of all sectors of struggling workers by endorsing these demands. In fact, why not hand out union cards to all the undocumented as proof that they have a right to live and work in this country?

Organization and the broadest unity are what all workers need to fight the vicious plutocracy that has plunged the whole planet into crisis. That struggle is sure to evolve into one against the whole rotten system of capitalism. The working class, united and organized, has the power to shut down capitalism and set up a socialist society — one geared to meet all human needs, not hand over mega-profits to a few. □

FIST calls for

'Freedom Summer Arizona' to fight racism & the right

The following statement was issued by the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST).

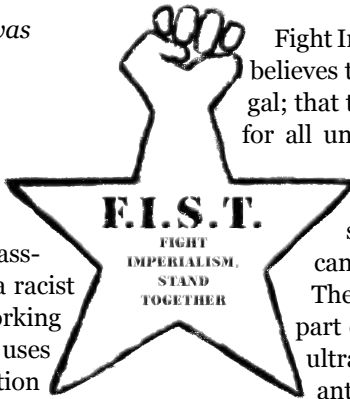
Despite all the assurances by Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, the recent passing of Senate Bill 1070 is a racist attack against the U.S. working class. SB 1070 — which uses local police forces to question people about their documentation, and criminalizes immigrant workers — smacks of South African apartheid and a host of other repressive laws from U.S. history and elsewhere.

This law comes in a particular political atmosphere: the rise of an ultraright grouping that has been given a national platform by pundits and the media, and has found an opening in the wake of the most profound economic crisis since the 1930s.

The Tea Party movement cannot be seen as divorced from the racist bill passed in Arizona any more than the attacks against immigrant workers can be seen outside the general political atmosphere precipitated by the economic crisis.

Those who would deny undocumented workers their dignity, by forcing this superexploited section of the working class underground, have no criticisms of the capitalist system. It is capitalism that has destroyed the livelihoods of workers around the world — from the austerity budgets forced upon Third-World countries by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank; to neoliberal trade pacts, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, that push farmers off their land. Capitalism unleashes unnatural calamities upon poor workers and the oppressed, forcing them into the so-called developed world.

From Africa, Central and Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe, workers are being forced to leave their homelands, risking their lives by crossing dangerous overland routes or choppy seas in small vessels to be able to care for their families.



Fight Imperialism, Stand Together believes that no human being is illegal; that there should be legalization for all undocumented workers; and that the racist apartheid law just passed in Arizona should be fought and that it can be defeated.

The fight has to be viewed as part of a larger fight against the ultraright, anti-woman, racist, anti-LGBT movement personified by the Tea Party and similar ilk. This includes Maricopa County, Ariz., Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who has used the Immigration and Customs Enforcement's 287(g) program, which deputizes local police and sheriff's officials as immigration authorities, to harass, attack, arrest and drive immigrant workers underground.

A national initiative is needed to beat back this new unjust law in Arizona. This could include something similar to Freedom Summer, which started in 1964 and sent hundreds of volunteers from the North to the South to defend the rights of Southern Black workers.

Already truck drivers have launched a boycott on deliveries to Arizona, and other activists and community members have planned other actions.

By passing the bill, Arizona has made itself the frontline of the fight against the ultraright and for immigrant rights. FIST calls on all forces — youth organizations, radicals, militants, anti-racists and community members — to mobilize for Arizona. Let's fight and beat back the ultraright and their racist program!

Youth and students, who over the past six months have demonstrated their ability and willingness to struggle, are especially needed. Youth and student organizations should begin making plans to show solidarity with those on the frontlines, and build a coordinated movement that is prepared to take leadership from other students, youth and community activists on the ground in Arizona.

Let's dedicate ourselves to a massive national campaign that designates this summer as "Freedom Summer Arizona."

Email: fist@workers.org

On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

Continued from page 5

S.F. Labor Council supports May Day

In keeping with past years, the San Francisco Labor Council voted April 12 to support a May Day demonstration there with the following demands: "Full rights for undocumented workers! Legalization/amnesty for all! Money for jobs and education, not war and occupation! Jobs for all! No budget cuts or fee hikes! Tax the rich and corporations!"

Two pro-labor lawyers appointed to NLRB

The recent appointments to the National Labor Relations Board of two pro-labor members — Craig Becker, a lawyer for the AFL-CIO and the Service Employees union, and Mark Pierce, a Buffalo attorney experienced in employment law

— was a promise the Obama administration fulfilled that the Republican Party, the Chamber of Commerce and other anti-union groups had blocked for years. The rest of labor's agenda — card check, single-payer health care legislation, immigration reform and a real jobs program to turn around rising unemployment and poverty — has been put on the back burner or has been compromised by the Democrats.

With the midyear elections coming, the Democratic Party desperately needs assurances that organized labor is on board to support the Democrats with its resources. The organized labor movement believes these pro-labor members will be helpful, and they will, but much more is needed to resist the unrelenting assault of the ruling class.

Build the labor movement from below! That was the lesson from the 1930s, when the NLRB was created. Stay tuned.

— **Milt Neidenberg**

Following leak of video

GIs ask Iraqis what they can do to make up for U.S. atrocities

By Gene Clancy

The following military maxim, “Bad leadership leads to bad behavior,” should condemn the Pentagon brass. On April 5, the organization WikiLeaks released a horrific video that vividly exposed the true character of the U.S.-led war of occupation in Iraq. Surreptitiously leaked from the Pentagon, the video portrayed graphic details of a massacre which killed at least 11 helpless civilians, including two Reuters journalists, and severely wounded two children. Two former GIs from the ground unit shown in the video, Josh Siebert and Ethan McCord, have stepped forward to take responsibility and apologize to the victims of the massacre. In a document of courage and humanity, these former GIs lay bare the criminal nature of U.S. wars and occupations that train young men and women to “kill or be killed,” and then ship them off to countries where invariably the entire population becomes their enemy. The following are excerpts from their

letter, which is an important step in confronting and opposing the U.S. occupation of Iraq and can also be applied to Afghanistan:

An open letter of reconciliation and responsibility to the Iraqi people from current and former members of the U.S. military

Peace be with you.

To all of those who were injured or lost loved ones during the July 2007 Baghdad shootings depicted in the “Collateral Murder” Wikileaks video:

We write to you, your family and your community with awareness that our words and actions can never restore your losses.

We are both soldiers who occupied your neighborhood for 14 months. Ethan McCord pulled your daughter and son from the van, and when doing so, saw the faces of his own children back home. Josh Stieber was in the same company but was not there that day, though he contributed to your pain and the pain of your community on many other occasions.

We have been speaking to whoever will listen, telling them that what was shown in the Wikileaks video only begins to depict the suffering we have created. From our own experiences, and the experiences of other veterans we have talked to, we know that the acts depicted in this video are everyday occurrences of this war: this is the nature of how U.S.-led wars are carried out in this region.

We acknowledge our part in the deaths and injuries of your loved ones as we tell [U.S.] Americans what we were trained to do and what we carried out in the name of “god and country.” The soldier in the video said that your husband shouldn’t have brought your children to battle, but we are acknowledging our responsibility for bringing the battle to your neighborhood, and to your family. We did unto you what we would not want done to us.

More and more Americans are taking responsibility for what was done in our name. Though we have acted with cold hearts far too many times, we have not forgotten our actions towards you. Our heavy hearts still hold hope that we can

restore inside our country the acknowledgment of your humanity that we were taught to deny.

We have asked our fellow veterans and servicemembers, as well as civilians both in the United States and abroad, to sign in support of this letter, and to offer their names as a testimony to our common humanity, to distance ourselves from the destructive policies of our nation’s leaders and to extend our hands to you.

With such pain, friendship might be too much to ask. Please accept our apology, our sorrow, our care and our dedication to change from the inside out. We are doing what we can to speak out against the wars and military policies responsible for what happened to you and your loved ones. Our hearts are open to hearing how we can take any steps to support you through the pain that we have caused.

Solemnly and Sincerely,

Josh Stieber,
former specialist, U.S. Army

Ethan McCord,
former specialist, U.S. Army

PALESTINIAN HIP-HOP *inspires resistance & hope*

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Political activists and hip-hop enthusiasts eagerly filled a midtown Atlanta club on April 16 to catch a dynamic performance by DAM, Palestine’s first hip-hop crew. A previously scheduled concert was thwarted in 2009 by the refusal of the U.S. State Department to grant visas for the internationally recognized group. This long-awaited, high-energy, politically charged concert fulfilled everyone’s expectations. DAM’s three members skillfully captured the brutality and cruelty of occupation through exquisitely powerful lyrics, which were met by loud applause, cheers and chants of “Free Palestine!”

In 1998, inspired by U.S. rappers such as Tupac Shakur and Public Enemy who used hip-hop to describe conditions of poverty, racism, police violence, drug use, alienation and despair for youth living in ghettos and barrios in the U.S., then-15-year-old Tamer Nafer began to pen his own lyrics and beats.

Born in the city of Lod or Al-Lyd, a suburb of Tel Aviv, Nafer’s family was one of

those living within an area of Palestine that was partitioned off and became Israel in 1948. The Arab neighborhoods are overcrowded and suffer rundown schools and few public services. A wall separates them from the newly built sections where Jewish settlers live.

Legally an Israeli, everything else defined Nafer as a second-class citizen in a country seeking to destroy his cultural identity. It was through hip-hop that he could express his anger, frustration and hope. He was soon joined by his brother, Suhell Nafer, and then by Mahmud Jreri. DAM was born.

The name has multiple meanings. In Arabic, it means “to last forever; eternity.” In Hebrew, it means “blood.” To the group, it stands for “Palestinian forever.” The letters in DAM also abbreviate “da Arabian MCs.”

In September 2000, Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon, accompanied by hundreds of armed police, went to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam’s holiest sites, to underscore Israel’s intention to control all of Jerusalem in defiance of international law. The Second Intifada broke out; youth with rocks and slingshots bat-

tled Israeli tanks and guns. Thousands of Palestinians were killed and many more injured and jailed during the following months. Yet the world’s attention only focused on Israeli deaths when suicide bombers struck inside Israel.

DAM’s song, “Meen Erhabe?” (“Who’s the Terrorist?”), released online in 2001, was downloaded more than 1 million times and became the anthem of resistance, not just in Palestine but in oppressed communities around the world. It exposed the nonstop oppression of occupation, and the daily humiliation and aggression committed by Israeli police and troops on Palestinian men, women and children. The song resonates with passionate determination to be free.

Performing in Arabic, Hebrew and English, DAM has collaborated with an array of Israeli filmmakers and musicians and is popular with Jewish youth who are refusing to serve in the occupation army. Their vision of a secular, egalitarian, democratic society appeals to young people tired of war and racism.

The ground-breaking film “Slingshot Hip Hop,” directed by Jackie Salloum,

propelled DAM into greater international visibility. Although the documentary includes the development of other hip-hop artists in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank as well as the emergence of young women onto the scene, the movie traces the political growth of DAM’s music as an expression of the ongoing struggle for justice and equality, not only of Palestinians but globally. They reference Malcolm X and Che Guevara, women’s rights and the role of writers, poets and musicians like Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish and Marcel Khalife.

The Atlanta concert was sponsored by the Movement to End Israeli Apartheid-Georgia, which was formed after the December 2008 Israeli attack on Gaza. Responding to the call by Palestinian civil society for boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns to sever ties with Zionist Israel, MEIA-G has launched a campaign to end a program located at Georgia State University that facilitates the cross-training of Georgia and Israeli police forces.

DAM’s U.S. tour includes San Diego, Los Angeles, Denver, Baltimore and New York City. Visit www.dampalestine.com. □

Reflections on the real U.S. role south of the border

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taries have gained access to all spheres of the government. There they have operated with impunity on behalf of private corporations, many of them U.S.-based.

Salvatore Mancuso, former head of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) paramilitary group, testified April 21 to the Colombian Supreme Court of Justice. Mancuso, who is currently in a U.S. prison after being extradited here in 2008, told the court that members of the Colombian army, the Security Administrative Department and the Office of the Prosecution collaborated with the AUC. He also implicated the current presidential candidate of the “U” Party (Uribe’s party), Juan Manuel Santos, who was defense minister (2006-09) under Uribe.

The Ecuadoran Office of Prosecution has accused Santos of murder for being the intellectual author of the bombing that the Colombian army carried out on this neighboring country in 2008, killing 25 people in a FARC encampment close to the border with Colombia.

U.S.-sponsored campaigns continue against Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua, and most virulently against Venezuela, using Colombia as an agent for destabilizing and mounting hostile media campaigns against its neighbor to the east.

Anti-imperialists in the U.S. must be vigilant and expose the aggression that U.S. imperialism carries out against the people of the south and show solidarity with the peoples there; as the union slogan says, “An injury to one is an injury to all.”

Students strike in Puerto Rico

In Puerto Rico, workers and students suffer from the U.S.-centered financial crisis. Last October the announcement of layoffs of thousands of workers (Workers World, Oct. 21) sparked the formation of a united front to struggle against the right-wing, privatizing policies of the current pro-U.S. Gov. Luis Fortuño administration.

The University of Puerto Rico — the most prestigious institution of higher learning on the island — is currently under attack. It differs from U.S. Ivy League colleges in that it is a public university that offers subsidies to students; most families can afford its average tuition. Now Fortuño wants to use privatization to change that too.

On April 13, UPR students held a gen-

eral assembly to plan actions in the face of an intransigent administration that wants to increase the tuition and eliminate special tuition rates for certain students with scholarships, among other anti-people, anti-student measures. The students voted overwhelmingly for a strike if there was no response to their demands.

On April 23, students started the strike and since then have been occupying the university. Solidarity from unions has been strong and steady. On April 26, students, unions and other political organizations are demonstrating in front of the UPR in solidarity with the students and opposing the governor’s neoliberal policy.

More on Latin America and on this struggle in coming issues.

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EDITORIAL

Primero de Mayo

Ahora es de suma prioridad que todos/as los/as trabajadores/as con conciencia de clase muestren su solidaridad con los/as inmigrantes, documentados/as e indocumentados/as.

La Legislatura del Estado de Arizona ha aprobado una ley anti-inmigrante que supera a todas las pasadas en perversidad — la acción más represiva desde las redadas Palmer de los años 1920 y el aislamiento en la década de 1940 de las personas de origen japones. Pocas leyes de inmigración pueden ser más destructivas de la solidaridad de clase que la de Arizona.

La firma de la gobernadora Jan Brewer ahora hace que el estado de Arizona en vez de ser el estado del Gran Cañón, sea el estado de la intolerancia totalitaria y de la xenofobia. Arizona ya se estaba dirigiendo allí, con el alguacil del condado Maricopa Joe Arpaio, listo para tomar su lugar en el Panteón de los villanos de clase mundial junto al infame Sheriff “Bull” Connor de Birmingham, Alabama. Connor utilizó perros de ataque contra manifestantes de derechos civiles. Ambos son delincuentes con uniforme.

Esta ley de Arizona es razón suficiente para despertar un llamado a la solidaridad entre todos los/as trabajadores/as de EEUU. Pero las acciones del gobierno federal han ido aún más lejos. Mientras que los helicópteros sobrevolaban, unos 800 agentes enmascarados de Inmigración y Aduanas, del FBI y otros del mal llamado Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, algunos armados con fusiles de asalto, lanzaron una operación militar contra barrios latinos e indígenas en Tucson, Phoenix y Nogales.

Arizona está recreando la época Nazi del Tercer Reich de Hitler. Arpaio suministra las ignorantes tropas de asalto. Los federales suministran a los profesionales de la Gestapo. A través del uso de máscaras para ocultar a los policías individuales, los funcionarios federales arrancaron la máscara del aparato del poder del estado imperialista estadounidense. Como las prisiones de Guantánamo, Abu Ghraib y de Bagram, al igual que los videos filtrados de Irak y la masacre de civiles en Afganistán, las redadas en Tucson muestran el rostro verdadero de la clase dominante estadounidense.

También hacen que las demostraciones del Primero de Mayo este año cobren una vital importancia. Las marchas serán muestra de la fuerza de la comunidad inmigrante. También serán una oportunidad. Todos/as los/as trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos — especialmente aquellos/as que no necesitan temer a la Gestapo de inmigración — pueden y deben mostrar la solidaridad más fuerte. Además debe haber solidaridad para detener las redadas. Y debe haber solidaridad para ganar la legalización para todos/as los/as trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos y reforzar la unidad y la solidaridad entre todos/as los/as trabajadores/as.

UNIDAD, UNIDAD, UNIDAD.

La legalización de todos/as los/as trabajadores/as fue la demanda de los/as inmigrantes de base en la gran manifestación en Washington el 21 de marzo. Esta demanda es justa para los/as trabajadores/as indocumentados/as. Ganarla, fortalecería a toda la clase trabajadora en este país en contra de la clase capitalista rapaz que está atacando los derechos y los ingresos de los/as trabajadores/as cada día en todos los sentidos. El periódico Workers World/Mundo Obrero apoya la exigencia de legalización un 100 por ciento.

Por lo tanto estamos opuestos/as a la “reforma migratoria” promovida por el Senador Charles Schumer (D-NY) y el senador Lindsey Graham (R -SC) la cual está apoyada por el Presidente Barack Obama. Esta “reforma” es totalmente insuficiente para ganar la legalización que los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes desean y necesitan. Además de esto, impone opresivos procedimientos de identificación biométricos a todos/as los/as trabajadores/as.

No obstante, aplaudimos la decisión de las coaliciones de inmigración en Los Ángeles de celebrar un Primero de Mayo unitario pese a tener diferentes posiciones sobre esta cuestión. La unidad en la acción fortalece la solidaridad dentro de la comunidad de inmigrantes. También hace posible que los/as trabajadores/as no inmigrantes puedan demostrar su solidaridad sin tener que respaldar una marcha sobre la otra. Los diferentes liderazgos pueden discutir sus respectivas posiciones mientras marchan unidos. Esto debería ocurrir en cada ciudad donde se celebra el Primero de Mayo.

En Nueva York, la Coalición 1 de Mayo, liderada por trabajadores/as inmigrantes y otros/as, ha convocado una acción en Union Square el primero de mayo por el quinto año consecutivo, exigiendo la legalización. Otro grupo de algunos sindicatos está convocando a su primera acción en otro lugar, exigiendo una reforma. La iniciativa de estos sindicalistas, con el objetivo anunciado de revitalizar el día como día de los/as trabajadores/as, sería completamente progresista de no haber sido contrapuesta a la marcha de la Coalición 1 de Mayo.

Al convocar una marcha por separado, este segundo grupo innecesariamente corre el riesgo de dividir a la clase trabajadora. Esperamos que el liderazgo haga uso de los restantes 10 días hasta el Primero de Mayo para encontrar una manera de llegar a un acuerdo sobre una acción unitaria a la cual querrán unirse todos/as los/as trabajadores/as progresistas en la ciudad. La solidaridad y la unidad son importantes en este Primero de Mayo. □

La ley de Arizona contra inmigrantes produce indignación y lucha

Por Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Arizona

23 de abril — Cuando el Senado de Arizona aprobó una amplia y racista ley anti-inmigrante el 19 de abril, desató una tormenta de indignación en las comunidades oprimidas de Arizona. El proyecto de ley legaliza la discriminación racial y penaliza a toda persona indocumentada calificándola de “intrusa”. También contiene disposiciones que atacan a los jornaleros, permite la incautación de cualquier vehículo que transporte una persona indocumentada y pide la detención de cualquier persona que proporcione ayuda a un/a indocumentado/a.

La gobernadora Jan Brewer firmó el proyecto de ley hoy 23 de abril. Esta ley es sólo la primera de muchos otros proyectos de ley racistas patrocinados por los derechistas que están llevándose a la legislatura de Arizona.

Unos días antes, el 15 de abril, unos 800 o más agentes del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional y de otras agencias federales llegaron a las comunidades oprimidas de Tucson. Los federales terrorizaron a las familias, parando autobuses que transportaban a los/as niños/as a la escuela y por seis horas crearon lo que equivalía a una ocupación militar del sur de la ciudad.

En respuesta a esta represión, un grupo de nueve estudiantes de colegios comunitarios llegaron de varias partes de Arizona y valientemente se encadenaron al edificio del Capitolio del Estado en Phoenix el 20 de abril. Los/as estudiantes se negaron a salir hasta que la Gobernadora Brewer vetara el proyecto de ley. Los/as nueve están pidiendo un movimiento nacional para emplear la desobediencia civil no violenta como la siguiente fase del Movimiento por los Derechos de los/as Inmigrantes.

En la realización de la desobediencia civil, los/as estudiantes fueron arrestados/as por agentes del condado de Maricopa y conducidos/as a la cárcel dirigida por el infame alguacil anti-inmigrante, Joe Arpaio. Conocidos/as ahora en todo el estado como los/as Nueve del Capitolio, los/as estudiantes fueron puestos/as en libertad el 21 de abril.

Leilani Clark, una estudiante del Colegio Comunitario Pima y miembro de Luchemos contra el Imperialismo, Unámonos (FIST, por las siglas en inglés), fue una de los nueve estudiantes detenidos. Ella dijo que la lucha contra la medida SB 1070 y todas las legislaciones tipo apartheid de Arizona exige una respuesta a nivel estatal y nacional.

Clark exhortó a todas las personas a que tomen acción. Hablando en nombre de los Nueve del Capitolio, Clark dijo a WW/Mundo Obrero, “No se dividan o retrasen por tener diferentes interpretaciones de cómo actuar — actúen. Sálganse, protesten, eduquen, boicoteen, marchen, hagan una huelga, lleven a cabo la desobediencia civil. Todo lo que puedan. ¡“Lo antes posible”!

En un comunicado de prensa publicado el 20 de abril, esto es lo que dijeron los Nueve sobre el SB 1070:

“Entre otras cosas, el proyecto de ley re-



FOTO: SJEP TUCSON

Leilani Clark, una de los nueve estudiantes arrestados en el Capitolio de Arizona por protestar la ley SB 1070.

queriría que la policía investigue, detenga y arreste a personas si hay una ‘sospecha razonable’ de que la persona pueda ser indocumentada. Esto daría a los agentes de la policía el poder absoluto de usar el perfil racial en base a la raza, color de piel, idioma, y/o acento. El SB 1070 es sólo el ataque más reciente que tornará a Arizona en un estado de apartheid, donde la gente de piel oscura será política, jurídica y económicamente discriminada y segregada”.

Miles siguen protestando

En la tarde del 20 de abril, alrededor de 100 personas se reunieron en el centro de Tucson en protesta de la SB 1070 y para exigir que la gobernadora vete el proyecto de ley. Al día siguiente, unos 200 estudiantes de secundaria se salieron de sus clases para protestar la ley. Hay reuniones y manifestaciones previstas en toda la ciudad para cada uno de los próximos días.

El 22 de abril miles protestaron frente al Capitolio en Phoenix, y otras acciones se llevaron a cabo el 23 de abril en Phoenix y Flagstaff exigiendo que Brewer vetara la ley. Los estudiantes, incluyendo a muchos/as de secundaria, realizaron una manifestación el 23 de abril en Tucson, saliendo de la escuela para hacerlo.

En su declaración, los/as Nueve del Capitolio, explicaron la importancia de su acción: “Arizona es la zona cero de la legislación del apartheid y también debe ser la zona cero de la acción organizada. ... Un pueblo sólo puede seguir siendo oprimido por algún tiempo antes de que surja de las sombras, de los márgenes, del olvido. Por eso hoy, estudiantes y miembros de la comunidad han recurrido a la desobediencia civil no violenta. Nos encadenamos al Capitolio del Estado de Arizona porque nada más ha funcionado. Estamos a favor de la justicia y por la recuperación de la democracia. Nuestro propósito es exponer la legislación de apartheid de Arizona y defender nuestra dignidad y nuestros derechos humanos”. □